



## **LUDLOW TOWN COUNCIL STAFFING COMMITTEE AGENDA**

To: All Members of the Council, Town Clerk  
Contact: Gina Wilding  
Ludlow Town Council, The Guildhall, Mill Street, Ludlow, SY8 1AZ  
01584 871970  
townclerk@ludlow.gov.uk  
Despatch date: 26<sup>th</sup> June 2026

### **STAFFING COMMITTEE**

You are summoned to attend a meeting of the  
Staffing Committee  
at the Guildhall, Mill Street, Ludlow, SY8 1AZ  
on **THURSDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> JULY 2026 at 4 PM**

*Gina Wilding*

Gina Wilding  
Town Clerk

### **Key Agenda Items:**

- The Fair Work Agency
- Employment Rights Act 2025
- Absence Report

**Public Open Session (15 minutes) – Members of the public are invited to make representations to the Council on any matters relating to the work of the Council or to raise any issues of concern.**



### 1. **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Councillors and members of the public are to note that the fire exit can be found to the left outside the Council Chamber and via the front door. The fire assembly point is on the pavement opposite the Guildhall. For fire safety purposes all Councillors should sign the attendance book and members of the public should sign the attendance sheet.

### 2. **RECORDING OF MEETINGS**

Under the Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014, recording and broadcast including blogging, tweeting and other social media is permitted during this meeting.

The act of recording and broadcasting must not interfere with the meeting.

The Council understands that some members of the public may not wish to be recorded and asks that they make this known immediately.

### 3. **MEETING PROTOCOL**

Members are reminded of the vital importance of mutual respect, professionalism, and full adherence to the Council's Code of Conduct, Standing Orders, and Meeting Protocol.

Councillors and officers have distinct yet complementary roles and work collaboratively in the best interests of the community. Councillors are responsible for setting policy and representing the public, while officers provide impartial advice and are tasked with implementing Council decisions.

During meetings, Members must conduct themselves with decorum, follow the established rules of debate, and respect the authority of the Chair.

**Disruptive behaviour, undue pressure on officers, or prioritising personal interests above Council objectives undermines good governance and is contrary to the standards of conduct expected in Council proceedings.**

Maintaining integrity, accountability, and a respectful environment is essential to ensuring effective and transparent decision-making.

### 4. **ELECTION OF A VICE CHAIR**

To receive nominations and elect a Vice Chair.

### 5. **APOLOGIES**

To receive apologies as notified to the Town Clerk.

### 6. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

*Members are reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.* (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/1464) (NB this does not preclude any later declarations.

a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interest



- b) Declaration of Conflicts of Interest
- c) Declarations of Personal Interest

**7. PUBLIC OPEN SESSION (15 minutes)**

Members of the public are invited to make representations to the Council on any matters relating to the work of the Council.

**8. MINUTES**

To approve as a correct record and sign the open and closed minutes of the **STAFFING COMMITTEE** on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

**9. ITEMS TO ACTION**

To note the Items to Action from the **STAFFING COMMITTEE** meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>ATTACHMENT</b>
<b>10. <u>TERMS OF REFERENCE</u></b> To consider the committee terms of reference.	<b>10</b>
<b>11. <u>THE FAIR WORK AGENCY</u></b> To consider that the Fair Work Agency (FWA) will be an Executive Agency of the Department for Business and Trade (DBT), created administratively. It will bring together existing state enforcement functions and, over time, take on enforcement of a wider range of employment rights. This will be a single place where workers and employers can turn for help.	<b>11</b>
<b>12. <u>EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT 2025</u></b> To consider the employment rights act: <a href="#">Plan to Make Work Pay and Employment Rights Act: timeline update - GOV.UK</a> and <a href="#">Employment Rights Act 2025 - Acas</a>	<b>12</b>
<b>13. <u>EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC: PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960</u></b> The Chairman will move that the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business pursuant to section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.	<b>No papers</b>
<b>14. <u>HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE</u></b> To consider the update.	<b>14</b>
<b>15. <u>ABSENCE</u></b> To consider the report.	<b>15</b>



***M e m b e r s h i p***

*Councillors: Addis, Cowell, Gill, Hepworth, Lyle, Maxwell-Muller, Owen, and Taylor*

**Date of the next Staffing Committee meeting:  
1<sup>st</sup> October 2026**

Item 8.

## **MINUTES**

## MINUTES

Minutes of a Staffing Committee Meeting held in the Guildhall, Mill Street, Ludlow on **THURSDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2026** at 9.30 am.

### **ST/78     PRESENT**

Chair:            Councillor Scott-Bell

Councillors: Lyle, Owen and Ward.

Officers:        Gina Wilding, Town Clerk  
                     Helen Jones, Senior Administrative Assistant

### **ST/79     ABSENT**

Councillors Cowell, Gill, Harris, Hepworth and Maxwell-Muller were absent.

### **ST/80     HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Chair informed Councillors of the fire exits, fire assembly point and asked that everyone sign the attendance log.

### **ST/81     RECORDING OF MEETINGS**

The Chair notified those present that under the Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014, recording and broadcasting is permitted during public session of Council Meetings.

### **ST/82     APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Cowell, Gill, Hepworth and Maxwell-Muller.

### **ST/83     DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests  
None declared.

Conflict of Interest  
None declared.

Personal Interests

None declared.

**ST/84     PUBLIC OPEN SESSION**

There were no members of the public or press present.

**ST/85     MINUTES**

**RESOLVED ISB/DL (unanimous)**

That the open and closed session minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

**ST/86     ITEMS TO ACTION**

**RESOLVED ISB/DL (unanimous)**

That the items to action of the Staffing Committee meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2025 be noted.

**ST/87     EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC: PUBLIC BODIES (ADMISSION TO MEETINGS) ACT 1960**

**RESOLVED ISB/DL (unanimous)**

That that the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business pursuant to section 1 of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, the public be excluded and the meeting continue in closed session.

The meeting closed at 10.22 am.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Closed session minutes will be issued.

## CLOSED SESSION MINUTES

Minutes of a Staffing Committee Meeting held in the Guildhall, Mill Street, Ludlow on **THURSDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2026** at 9.30 am.

**ST/88**      **RECRUITMENT**

**RESOLVED ISB/DW (unanimous)**

That the Job Description / Person Specification be amended to explicitly state that the successful candidate will not be provided with a vehicle and will be expected to travel between the sites at Castle Street, Smithfield and Linney by appropriate means, which may include walking.

**ST/89**      **HEALTH & SAFETY MONITORING**

**RESOLVED ISB/DW (unanimous)**

That a summary of the full Health & Safety monitoring process is brought to the next Staffing Committee meeting for review.

**ST/90**      **APPRAISALS**

**RESOLVED ISB/DL (unanimous)**

That the Health and Safety Executive Stress Indicator Tool be adopted, with survey results analysed by department where anonymity can be maintained, and that headline figures for absence due to stress be reported to the Staffing Committee.

**ST/91**      **EFFICIENCY REVIEW**

**RESOLVED ISB/DL (unanimous)**

That the report and notes from the January Efficiency Review (ER) T&F Group meeting be noted, and that the next ER T&F meeting is held at the Guildhall at 10am on Friday 24th April 2026.

The meeting closed at 10.22 am.

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Chair

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Date

Item 9.

## **ITEMS TO ACTION**

# Staffing Committee

## Items to Action

<u>Min No.</u>	<u>Resolution</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Date</u>
<b>ONGOING</b>				
<b>Staffing Meeting 26/03/26</b>				
ST/89	<p><b><u>HEALTH &amp; SAFETY MONITORING</u></b></p> <p><b><u>RESOLVED</u> ISB/DW (unanimous)</b></p> <p>That a summary of the full Health &amp; Safety monitoring process is brought to the next Staffing Committee meeting for review.</p>		Ongoing	
ST/90	<p><b><u>APPRAISALS</u></b></p> <p><b><u>RESOLVED</u> ISB/DL (unanimous)</b></p> <p>That the Health and Safety Executive Stress Indicator Tool be adopted, with survey results analysed by department where anonymity can be maintained, and that headline figures for absence due to stress be reported to the Staffing Committee.</p>		Ongoing	
<b>COMPLETE</b>				
<b>Staffing Meeting 10/12/25</b>				
ST/68	<p><b><u>SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY</u></b></p> <p><b><u>RESOLVED</u> KC/ISB (unanimous)</b></p>	To update the risk assessment and pass to	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Dec 2025</b>

## Staffing Committee

### Items to Action

	That the updated Sexual Harassment Risk Assessment be approved.	Policy & Finance Committee Officer.		
ST/77	<p><b><u>EFFICIENCY REVIEW</u></b></p> <p><b><u>RESOLVED ISB/DL (unanimous)</u></b></p> <p>That the first Efficiency Review Task &amp; Finish Group meeting be set for either 2 pm on 15th January 2026 or during the working day on 16th January 2026, time to be confirmed depending on majority councillor availability.</p>	First meeting took place 15 <sup>th</sup> January 2026.	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Jan 2026</b>
<b><u>Staffing Meeting</u></b> <b>26/03/26</b>				
ST/88	<p><b><u>RECRUITMENT</u></b></p> <p><b><u>RESOLVED ISB/DW (unanimous)</u></b></p> <p>That the Job Description / Person Specification be amended to explicitly state that the successful candidate will not be provided with a vehicle and will be expected to travel between the sites at Castle Street, Smithfield and Linney by appropriate means, which may include walking.</p>	Amend Job Description / Person Specification.	<b>Complete</b>	<b>March 2026</b>

Item 10.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**



## **STAFFING COMMITTEE** **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **1.0 Introduction**

The following general terms of reference apply to all Committees:

- 1.1 That all delegated powers be exercised in accordance with any policy adopted, or directions given, by the Town Council.
- 1.2 That powers be subject to the Council's Standing Orders, Standing Orders on Contracts and Financial and Administrative Regulations.
- 1.3 That any unresolved differences between Committees, Sub-Committees and Advisory Committees shall be referred to Full Council for determination.
- 1.4 Day to day management of Council matters rest with the Town Clerk as proper officer of the Council and the Responsible Financial Officer.
- 1.5 That all urgent and emergency matters will be dealt with as they arise by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the relevant Committee and reported to the next appropriate Committee or Full Council meeting whichever comes first.
- 1.6 Committees will bring to the attention of Council any matters being pursued by other local authority/statutory/voluntary or other bodies which may have a beneficial or detrimental effect on Ludlow.

### **2.0 Membership**

- 2.1 The Committee will meet three times a year, and then as and when required.
- 2.2 Committee Membership is open to all Councillors.
- 2.3 All Members of Ludlow Town Council will receive copies of every agenda.
- 2.4 Membership of this Committee will only be made up from serving Councillors.
- 2.5 The Mayor may not become the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Staffing Committee.
- 2.6 As befitting for the role, the members of the committee shall act with impartiality and integrity at all times.

### **3.0 Procedures**

- 3.1 The Committee will operate within Ludlow Town Council's Standing Orders and Local Government Law.
- 3.2 At the Annual Meeting of Ludlow Town Council the Town Council shall elect a Chair for this Committee for the forthcoming year from amongst its membership. A Vice Chair shall be elected at the first meeting of the Committee. The Chair and Vice Chair may be re-elected.
- 3.3 The Committee will submit all its minutes of meetings to the next appropriate meeting of Ludlow Town Council.
- 3.4 The Town Clerk and Administrative Officer will provide administrative support for the Committee.

### **4.0 Delegated Committee Functions**

- 4.1 To facilitate and decide staff disciplinary matters in accordance with the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.
- 4.2 To facilitate and decide staff grievance matters in accordance with the Council's Grievance Procedure.
- 4.3 To review staff work/life balance, working conditions and well-being, including the monitoring staff absence in accordance with the Council's Sickness & Absence Policy.
- 4.4 Consider staff retirement issues.
- 4.5 To facilitate and decide the appointment and recruitment process of Council employees, including advertising, approval of job descriptions and taking the lead on the recruitment and selection of staff in accordance with the council's Recruitment and Selection Policy.
- 4.6 To receive pay awards, staff appraisals and other human resource matters.
- 4.7 To provide full Council with minutes of its meetings.
- 4.8 To periodically monitor and consult with the Town Clerk on the staffing structure.
- 4.9 To keep up to date with developments in employment law and check that the Council complies with the appropriate requirements.
- 4.10 To keep up to date with developments in staff related health and safety law and check that the council complies with the appropriate requirements including risk assessments.
- 4.11 To facilitate HR training for Committee members.

Adopted by Council 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2013

Reviewed & Adopted by Council 14<sup>th</sup> May 2014; 13<sup>th</sup> May 2015; 11<sup>th</sup> May 2016; 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017; 9<sup>th</sup> May 2018; 2019; 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022; 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023; 11<sup>th</sup> December 2023, 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025, 13<sup>th</sup> May 2026

- 4.12 To undertake the annual appraisal of the town clerk. In agreement with the town clerk, the appraisal panel shall be up to three members of the committee, who shall also support the town clerk through the pressures and stresses of the role.
- 4.13 To monitor and periodically review the Staff Induction Policy and Procedure.
- 4.14 To monitor and periodically review the Councillor Induction Policy and Procedure.
- 4.15 Any other action as directed by the Council.

## **5.0 Confidentiality**

All members must preserve confidentiality of discussions held at meetings during closed session.

## **6.0 Delegated powers**

Subject to agreement by the full Council, the Committee will hold delegated powers to decide personnel, employment and recruitment matters, except in relation to the Town Clerk when matters must be ratified by Council.

## **7.0 Rules of procedure**

The Staffing Committee shall meet as they decide but not less than twice yearly. Meetings will normally be held in private but the Committee may choose from time to time to invite relevant individuals to attend for specific reasons. All meetings will be minuted as appropriate.

Decision will be by simple majority with the Chair of the Committee to hold a second casting vote for use if required.



## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Disciplinary Hearing Panel**

Council has granted delegated decision-making powers to the Disciplinary Hearing Panel in relation to staff disciplinary issues.

The Chair of Staffing Committee (or, in their absence, the Vice-Chair of Staffing), will appoint three members from the Staffing Committee to a Disciplinary Hearing Panel.

The Disciplinary Hearing Panel meeting will be called by the Town Clerk and notice will be given to the employee.

A minute taker will be present throughout the proceedings.

The Disciplinary Hearing Panel will follow the procedure set out in Ludlow Town Council Disciplinary Procedure.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Appeals Panel**

Council has granted delegated decision-making powers to the Appeals Panel in relation to any appeal against the decision of the Disciplinary Hearing Panel or the outcome of a Grievance.

The Chair of Staffing Committee (or, in their absence, the Chair of the Council) will appoint three members from Staffing Committee, or other trained members of the Council to an Appeals Panel. Any member who has been involved in the original Disciplinary Hearing Panel shall not form part of the Appeals Panel.

The Appeals Panel will be appointed when any appeals against dismissal, grading and grievances by employees of the Council are made.

The Town Clerk will call the meeting, and notice will be given to the employee.

A minute taker will be present throughout the proceedings.

The Appeals Panel will follow the procedure set out in Ludlow Town Council Disciplinary Procedure.

Item 11.

**FAIR WORK AGENCY**

## What changes has the Act made to the law?

The Fair Work Agency (FWA) will be an Executive Agency of the Department for Business and Trade (DBT), created administratively. It will not have its own distinct legal identity, so the Act gives the Secretary of State a series of functions to enforce certain employment legislation. Those functions will in practice be discharged through the FWA, including by enforcement officers appointed by the Secretary of State.

The FWA bring together existing state enforcement functions and, over time, take on enforcement of a wider range of employment rights. This will be a single place where workers and employers can turn for help. It will improve efficiency by ensuring there is one leadership team to oversee work in line with a unified strategy. The FWA will aim to resolve issues upstream by supporting employers that want to comply with the law. But it will also have strong powers to investigate and take action against businesses that flout the law, to level the playing field for compliant businesses.

The Act confers a single set of powers to investigate and take action against businesses that do not comply with the law. These are based on powers of the existing enforcement bodies as well as new powers to ensure the FWA has the tools it needs to enforce its wider remit. These include:

- Powers to inspect workplaces and require employers to produce relevant documents and evidence to demonstrate compliance with employment law, based on powers the existing bodies have.
- A civil penalty regime (based on the National Minimum Wage Act 1998) - where enforcement officers find that employers have underpaid their workers, they will be able to issue Notices of Underpayment that require the employer to pay workers their due and pay a penalty to government.
- A civil proceedings power - the power to bring proceedings in the employment tribunal on a worker's behalf, and to offer legal advice and assistance where someone is, or may be, party to civil legal cases related to employment or trade union law.
- An enforcement regime in respect of labour market criminal offences (based on the Labour Market Enforcement regime in the Immigration Act 2016) - this involves voluntary Labour Market Enforcement Undertakings and compulsory Labour Market Enforcement Orders that require employers to correct their behaviour. Breach of a Labour Market Enforcement Order is an offence that can result in fines or imprisonment.
- Cost recovery - the Secretary of State will be able to set out, in regulations, how the Fair Work Agency can impose charges to recover enforcement costs from employers against whom enforcement action has been taken for non-compliance.

## How is this different from the previous legislation?

Most employment rights are currently enforced by individuals presenting a complaint to an Employment Tribunal. A more limited number of employment rights are enforced by the state on workers' behalf - such as the national minimum wage or protections for agency workers. The current system of state enforcement is fragmented and inefficient. This complicates the process for both

workers and employers seeking help and means many workers are unable to enforce their rights, resulting in certain breaches, like underpayments, going unchallenged.

The Act brings together existing state enforcement functions, as well as functions relating to Holiday Pay and Statutory Sick Pay (which will be implemented in later stages) and includes a power for the Secretary of State to make affirmative regulations to expand the remit of the state enforcement functions to include other employment legislation. The Secretary of State must obtain consent of the relevant Northern Ireland department before exercising this power in relation to legislation that is transferred for Northern Ireland.

The FWA will bring together the functions of the Gangmaster and Labour Abuse Authority, the Director of Labour Market Enforcement, the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate, and HMRC's National Minimum Wage Unit. The Act therefore provides for the transfer of these bodies' functions to the FWA and for their removal from the statute book. The Act also requires the Secretary of State to create an advisory board with a social partnership model: equal representation from businesses, trade unions, and independent experts, which will provide advice to the FWA.

## When will these changes come into force?

Measure	Expected Commencement
Establishment of the Fair Work Agency	April 2026

## What further detail will be consulted on and when?

The Employment Rights Act is the first phase of delivering the Fair Work Agency. The Government will set out further details including timescales for implementation in due course. Once in place, the FWA will be a strong, recognisable single brand so workers know where to go for help. The FWA will take a balanced approach to upholding workers' rights. The FWA will provide better support to businesses on how to comply with the law and will take tough action against rogue employers who exploit their workers. That is fair for workers, and fair for businesses too.

Implementation will be done in phases following Royal Assent, and we will publish details of our approach to implementation in due course.

## Key Stats

The Resolution Foundation estimates that 900,000 UK workers per year have their holiday pay withheld, valuing around £2.1bn (£2,300 each).<sup>1</sup>

Research by the Resolution Foundation found that more than 1-in-10 of the lowest-paid workers report that they receive no paid holiday, four-times higher than the highest-paid.<sup>2</sup>

The Low Pay Commission estimates that 19.4% of workers paid at or around the wage floor were underpaid the minimum wage in 2024 (around 371,000 employee jobs).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Enforce for Good, Resolution Foundation (2023)

<sup>2</sup> Enforce for Good, Resolution Foundation (2023)

<sup>3</sup> Compliance and Enforcement of the National Minimum Wage in 2024, Low Pay Commission (2024)

## Common questions

*What employment rights will the FWA enforce?*

The FWA will have a more ambitious remit that goes further than the previous 'single enforcement body' proposal. It will take on enforcing domestic agency rules, the minimum wage, licensing standards for gangmasters and certain aspects of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. In time, it will also take on additional rights such as holiday pay and statutory sick pay. As mentioned above, there will be flexibility to bring in additional legislation as new challenges emerge.

*How will the FWA be kept accountable for doing its job?*

The Employment Rights Act requires us to produce an annual report on the work of the FWA and an enforcement strategy every three years. Both the reports and strategies, as well as any updates, must be published and must be laid in Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly. They will be subject to parliamentary scrutiny in the usual way.

*When will the FWA actually be up and running?*

Implementation will be done in phases following Royal Assent, starting with establishing the body in April 2026, bringing together the existing enforcement bodies and functions. We will publish details of our further approach to implementation in due course.

Item 12.

## **EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS ACT 2025**

# Factsheet: Employment Rights Act 2025 – Overview

## Overview

The Employment Rights Act 2025 is a key pillar of the government's Plan to Make Work Pay, which is aimed at growing the economy, boosting wages, and reducing insecure work. The Act was developed in close collaboration with business and trade unions and will help bring our employment rights legislation into the 21st century, extending modern protections to millions more workers.

## What measures are contained within the Act?

The Act addresses **one-sided flexibility**, ensuring that jobs provide a baseline of security for workers by:

- Ending exploitative **zero hours contracts** by introducing rights to guaranteed hours, reasonable notice of shifts, and payments for short-notice cancellation of shifts, with corresponding rights for agency workers.
- Ending unscrupulous **'fire and rehire'** and **'fire and replace'** practices by considering dismissals for failing to agree to a change in certain core contractual terms as automatically unfair, except where businesses are in severe financial difficulties and genuinely have no alternative.
- Reducing the qualifying period of employment for the right to claim **unfair dismissal**, from two-years to six-months and ensuring the qualifying period can only be varied by primary legislation in future. The current cap on compensatory awards will also be removed.
- Strengthening **collective redundancy rights** by 1) ensuring obligations to collective consult and notify the government apply when: (a) employers propose 20 or more redundancies at one establishment or; (b) employers propose a number of redundancies across their entire organisation which meets a new threshold which will be set in secondary legislation and 2) doubling the maximum period of the protective award for failure to properly consult on collective redundancies, increasing the maximum period from 90 to 180 days' pay.
- Closing the **maritime redundancy notification loophole**, ensuring that operators providing regular services to British ports cannot avoid the collective redundancy notification requirement.

The Act ensures **workers get fair pay** for a fair day's work by:

- **Strengthening Statutory Sick Pay** by removing the Lower Earnings Limit and removing the waiting period.
- Establishing the School Support Staff Negotiating Body to ensure that all school support staff in England have a sector specific voice for pay, conditions, training and career progression, and will be entitled to the same statutory minimum terms. Providing for the establishment of a **Fair Pay Agreements** process in the adult social care sector in England and social care sectors in Scotland and Wales.
- **Strengthening** existing **tipping law** by requiring employers to consult with workers when developing or revising their tipping policies, increasing transparency, worker voice and accountability in how tips are handled.
- Re-introducing the **two-tier code** on workforce matters ensuring that employees from the private sector working on outsourced contracts will be offered terms and conditions broadly comparable to those transferred from the public sector.
- Allowing for the creation of a **mandatory Seafarers' Charter**, to protect the working conditions of seafarers aboard ships operating regular services from UK ports.

- Providing powers to maintain compliance with international law by staying up to date with **international maritime conventions**.

The Act supports **family friendly rights** by improving flexibility and security by:

- Making existing entitlements to **Paternity Leave and Unpaid Parental leave** available from 'Day 1' of employment.
- Enabling parents to take their paternity leave and pay after their shared parental leave and pay.
- Introducing a new right to unpaid **bereavement leave**, including unpaid **bereavement leave for pregnancy loss** (before 24 weeks), allowing employees to take leave from work to grieve the loss of a loved one.
- Introducing new **protections against dismissal for pregnant women**, mothers on Maternity Leave and mothers for at least six months after they return to work - except in specific circumstances.
- Strengthening the existing 'day-one' right to request **flexible working**, by introducing a clearer process for employers to follow when a request cannot be agreed, requiring employers to explain their rationale for denying a request and adding the requirement that a rejection of a request be reasonable.
- Undertaking a review of the duties people can take time off work to do under the Time Off for Public Duties legislation, with specific reference to Special Constables.

The Act prioritises **fairness, equality and wellbeing of workers** by:

- Strengthening the duty on employers to take 'reasonable steps' to **prevent sexual harassment** of their employees by requiring them to take 'all reasonable steps'.
- Introducing an obligation on employers to not permit **harassment of their employees by third parties**.
- Creating a power to enable regulations to specify steps that are to be regarded as 'reasonable', to determine whether an employer has taken all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment.
- Strengthening protections for **whistleblowers**, by making it clear that workers who 'blow the whistle' on sexual harassment can benefit from whistleblowing protections against detriment (adverse treatment) and unfair dismissal.
- Working with employers to **improve gender equality** by requiring large employers to produce action plans, setting out how they are addressing the gender pay gap and supporting employees through menopause.
- Voiding any provision in a **Non-Disclosure Agreement** between a worker and employer which seeks to stop a worker from speaking out about harassment and discrimination they have experienced.

The Act **modernises trade union legislation**, giving trade unions greater freedom to organise, represent and negotiate on behalf of their workers, by:

- Repealing the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023.
- Repealing the great majority of the Trade Union Act 2016.
- Increasing the ballot mandate expiration date to 12-months and decreasing the notice period for industrial action to 10 days.
- Introducing a framework for trade unions to negotiate access to workplaces with employers, with the ability for the CAC to impose access where certain conditions are met.
- Simplifying trade union recognition process, including providing better access arrangements for unions and dealing more effectively with unfair practices.
- Introducing new rights and protections for trade unions representatives.
- Introducing a duty for employers to inform workers of their right to join a trade union.
- Broadening the scope of blacklisting protections which may be made in regulations.
- Simplifying the information required for industrial action notices.

- Providing protection from detriment and unfair dismissal on the grounds of industrial action.

Finally, the Act improves **enforcement** of employment rights by:

- Establishing the **Fair Work Agency (FWA)**, which will bring together the enforcement of domestic agency rules, the National Minimum Wage, licensing of gangmasters, and action against serious labour exploitation. It will also take on additional functions (such as the enforcement of holiday pay) and creates the flexibility to bring in additional legislation to respond to future challenges. The Act will give the FWA the tools it needs to do its job, including an expanded civil penalty regime, clear gateways for sharing information and the power to bring tribunal cases on behalf of workers. The Act also creates a strong governance framework – including an Advisory Board with a social partnership model that puts business, trade union and independent expertise at the heart of the FWA.
- **Increasing the time limit** within which employees are able to make an Employment Tribunal claim from 3 months to 6 months.
- Bringing **umbrella companies** (payment intermediaries) within scope of the Employment Agencies Act 1973, allowing for their regulation and state enforcement. The FWA will be able to take action against those umbrella companies who do not fulfil their legal obligations, allowing for their regulation and state enforcement.
- Requiring the Health and Safety Executive and the Office of Rail and Road to produce guidance setting out the circumstances in which 14 to 16 year olds may undertake voluntary work in heritage railways settings, with regard to section 1 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act 1920.

## What happens now?

- The Act will be delivered in phases across a two-year period. This approach will ensure that employees and employers have time to plan and prepare.
- Common commencement dates will be used to commence the majority of regulations laid using the powers provided for in the Act (6th April and 1st October).
- The first measures will come into effect at Royal Assent or soon after. These will repeal the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023 and parts of the Trade Union Act 2016, restoring workers' ability to take industrial action without excessive legal barriers.
- In April 2026 we will deliver day one rights to statutory sick pay and paternity leave, as well as launching the Fair Work Agency.
- The Government previously published a Roadmap<sup>1</sup> setting out expected implementation plans for all measures within the Act. The Government remains committed to the timelines set out in the Roadmap and will provide further updates and support to help employers and workers prepare for reforms in 2026.
- As set out in the Roadmap, the Government is also consulting on the detail of some of the measures within the Act. These consultations are being phased to allow employers from all sectors, workers, trade unions and other stakeholders to fully engage with the complex policy issues at hand. Responses to these consultations can be found on GOV.UK.<sup>2</sup>
- The Government has undertaken an extensive programme of engagement around the Act and broader Plan to Make Work Pay. This has been underpinned by a strong commitment to working in partnership with businesses and trade unions to ensure policy is firmly pro-business and pro-worker. The engagement approach has received praise from business and trade unions alike. It will continue throughout delivery of the Act and beyond.

<sup>1</sup> [Implementing the Employment Rights Bill - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>2</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/collections/make-work-pay](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/make-work-pay)